



Lessons Learned Measuring Institutional Strengthening

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Overview

- Summarize key elements commonly used to define capacity building
- Describe main challenges of measuring capacity building efforts
- Describe four tools Chemonics has used to measure capacity building and explain their strengths and limitations
- Share lessons learned designing and implementing these tools
- Suggest options for improving capacity building measurement efforts



Capacity Building Defined

- Process of developing and strengthening capacities of individuals and institutions to achieve their own objectives
- Capacities (knowledge, skills, attitudes, experience, behaviors, acquisition and use of resources) are obtained, strengthened, and maintained
- Different categories: Management, technical, governance, culture, finance, technology, communications, etc.
- Different levels: individual, institutional, societal
- Different results: Product, Performance, Permanence



Measurement Challenges

- Lack of operational definition of capacity building: What, for whom, why?
- Multi-dimensional concept:
 - Various components
 - Various levels: Individual, institutional, societal
 - Various degrees
 - Various results: Product vs. performance vs. permanence
 - Various factors: Internal and external
- Capacity building is a long and continuous process of learning, adaptation, and improvement; yet drive for quick results
- Top-down approach to designing indicators and tools
- Aggregation and attribution of results difficult



Capacity Building Assessments

- Participatory Organizational Needs Assessment Tool (PONAT)
- Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT)
- The M&E Capacity Assessment Tool
- Partner Institutional Viability Assessment (PIVA) Index



PONAT for West Bank/Gaza TAMKEEN

- Tool developed by West Bank/Gaza TAMKEEN to assess needs of grant and assistance recipient Civil Society Organizations
- Interacts with CSO stakeholders on the attributes of an effective organization
- Based on fact that there are best practices, common to most healthy organizations
- Components assessed include management, program delivery, human resources, external relations, and finance



PONAT Sample

Climate Survey Questionnaire

Governance	Strongly disagree			Strongly agree	
I believe the board provides the organization with: •Oversight •Policy definition	0	1	2	3	4

General Survey Triangulation Matrix

Governance	DR	II	DO
Does the board provide the organization with: •Oversight •Policy definition	Board mandate	Chairman of the Board	

General Survey

Governance	Yes	No	Remarks
Does the board provide the organization with: •Oversight •Policy definition			



PONAT Strengths

- Four parallel tools for data collection: General survey, climate survey, triangulation matrix and focus group meetings
- Builds consensus around future priorities



PONAT Limitations

- Two surveys provide quantitative data and focus groups and triangulation matrix give qualitative data; then different scoring methodologies need to be reconciled
- Organizational development committee comprised of only top leaders (the director, the finance manager, the chief technical officer, and the chairman of the board)
- Low incentive: No bearing on the organization's ability to benefit from Tamkeen's grants



OCAT for Technical Management Agent (TMA) Uganda Civil Society Fund

- Tool developed by Uganda TMA to monitor and evaluate the institutional capacity development of its grantees
- Based on a McKinsey framework for conceptualizing different components of organizational capacity
- Learning tool for institutional self-understanding: Self-assessment tool
- After grant award and linked to planning and goal-setting process at the CSO level



OCCAT Strengths

- Focus on helping, rather than judging
- Assessment participants lead in determining the relative capacity levels; assessment teams play a facilitation role
- Comprehensive: includes institutional (governance and executive leadership, vision/mission/culture, operations, human, resource management and external relations and IT) and programmatic (technical, mobilization of financial resources, service delivery, program communication and advocacy)
- Four-level rating scale with objective/observable descriptions that demonstrate capacity at each level



OCCAT Sample

Capacity Component	Level 1: Clear Need For Increased Capacity	Level 2: Basic Level of Capacity In Place	Level 3: Moderate Level of Capacity In Place	Level 4: High Level of Capacity In Place
Capacity Element: Governance and Leadership				
CEO and senior management team – leadership effectiveness	Has difficulty building trust and rapport with others; ...	Is responsive to opportunities from others to work together; ...	Actively and easily builds rapport and trust with others; ...	Constantly establishing successful win-win relationships with others; ...



OCCAT Limitations

- Unclear targets and lowest scores may not be priorities
- Varying levels of skills of internal assessors
- Standard vs local adaptation
- Subjective



Uganda Monitoring and Evaluation Agent (MEA) M&E Capacity Assessment Tool

- Tool developed by the TMA and MEA of the Uganda Civil Society Fund to track progress toward strengthening the M&E capacity of CSOs.
- The tool is one module of a three-module toolkit to assess CSO's technical, financial, and M&E capacity
- Assessment of key elements of M&E capacity: capacity to collect, analyze, report, and use high quality M&E data



MEA M&E Capacity Assessment Tool (cont'd)

Assessment Methodology

- Review of grantee contract, work plans, M&E plans and guidelines, data collection tools, data files, and reports
- Assessments conducted during joint support supervision visits by MEA staff
- Direct interview with CSO M&E officer and/or program officer
- Review of recommendations with CSO M&E officer and/or program officer
- Data scored using a scoring sheet designed by MEA and entered and analyzed in Excel



MEA M&E Capacity Assessment Tool (cont'd)

Questionnaire/Checklist (with yes/no answers)
with 8 components, each with sub-components:

- Use of Civil Society Fund (CSF) standardized data collection and reporting tools
- Availability of CSO own monitoring tools
- Status of data files
- Data quality assessment for selected indicators
- Data use
- Status of computer facilities
- M&E staff
- M&E guidelines



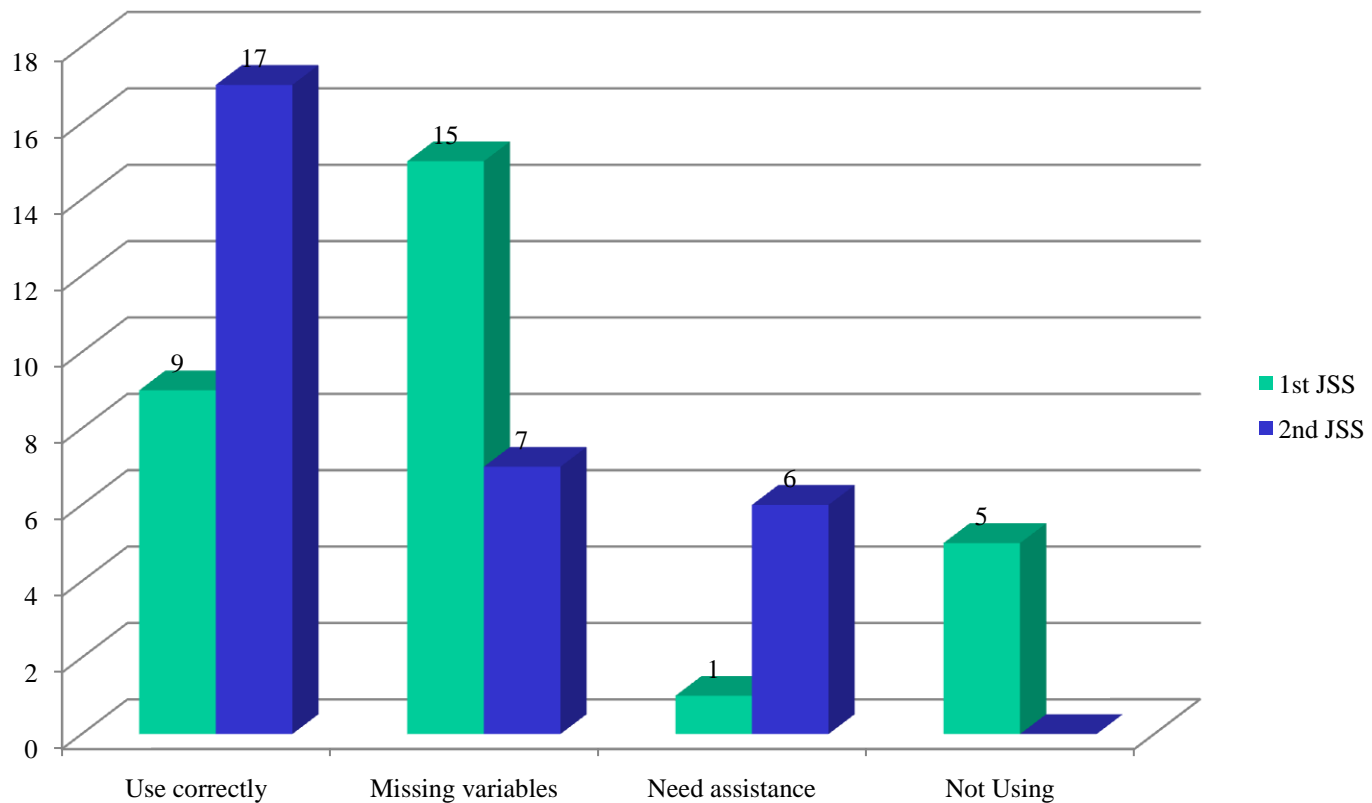
Sample MEA M&E Capacity Question

Use of standardized data collection and reporting tools

- Does the CSO use standardized data collection tools provided by the CSF? (Yes/No)
- Is the CSO using standardized data collection tool provided by the CSF as a primary data collection tool (Yes/No)?
- If no, give reasons and assess the tool in use.
- If yes, take a look at the tools/registers and see if data set for reporting period assessed is complete, accurately filled with no missing data



Sample Assessment Results: Use of Standardized Data Collection and Reporting Tools





M&E Capacity Assessment Tool Strengths and Limitations

- Strengths
 - Simple to use and quick to administer
 - Easy tabulation and analysis of results
 - Immediate response to some of the identified problems
- Limitations
 - Subjective and limiting (Yes/No), difficult to understand level of capacity
 - Some elements of M&E capacity not sufficiently assessed or missing



Partner Institutional Viability Assessment (PIVA) Index

- Tool developed by USAID REDSO/ESA
- Adapted from the Development Center/World Learning Institutional Assessment instrument
- Applied by Chemonics RATES Project from 2002-2009 and Ghana TIPCEE Project from 2004-2009
- The purpose of the RATES PIVA index was to measure/track the organizational viability of USAID regional partner organizations in order to improve their performance. TIPCEE used it to assess the effectiveness of producer associations supported by the project



PIVA (cont'd)

- Tool designed according to 6 organizational competency areas
 - Governance
 - Operations and management
 - Human Resources Development
 - Financial Resources
 - Service delivery
 - External relations and advocacy
- Several sub-competency areas under each of these main areas
- Several elements under each sub-competency



PIVA (cont'd)

- Sub-competency elements are assessed according to 4 stages of development: Start-up, Developing, Consolidating, Mature
- Elements of each sub-category under each area and development stage well described
- A 4-point scale (1-low/poor and 4-high/advanced) used to rate each element
- Total score for each competency area based on total averaged sub-competency area scores
- Total averaged scores for all components provide the overall PIVA rating
- Self administered or facilitated assessment



PIVA Snapshot

A. Governance

Category	Start-up Stage	Developing Stage	Consolidating Stage	Mature Stage
Governing Body				
Existence of Governing Body	Advisory committee for other pre-governing structure in place.	Governing Body members identified but not yet meeting regularly.	Governing Body is meeting regularly, but attendance is erratic.	Governing Body in place and meeting regularly with full participation



Sample PIVA Results for EAGC Governance & Leadership Component

PIVA- EAGC 2006 & 2007		SCORE	
		2006	2007
Governance & Leadership			
A. Governance systems			
1	Existance of governing Body	2	4
2	Differentiation of Oversight& Management roles	1	3
3	Managing transitions	1	2
4	Governing Body Composition & Diversity	2	3
5	Capacity to Carry out roles	1	2
B. Mission			
6	Statement of purpose	2	3
7	Organization's understanding of mission	2	2
8	Links between mission programs	2	3
C. Legal Status			
9	Registration Status	1	3
10	Compliance with labor, reporting requirements	1	3
D. Constituency			
11	Definition of constituency	2	2
12	Constituency Advocacy	2	3
13	Constituency Outreach	2	2
E. Leadership			
14	Governing Body and Senior Management roles	1	2
15	Clarity and ownership of vision of organization	1	2
16	Clarity of roles: balance in direction and authority	1	2
17	Participation of staff in decision-making	1	2
Sub-total			
Total Governance Points		25	43



PIVA Strengths

- Relatively easy to use tool
- Less burdensome, only critical categories assessed
- Numerical scoring and stage ranking presents a balanced qualitative and quantitative picture of a complex organization



PIVA Limitations

- Subjective: Heavy reliance on evaluator's opinion
- Interpretation of overall PIVA rating could be misleading. Organizations can be at various stages of development within one single component
- Lack of a roadmap for improvement



Lessons Learned

- Similarities among tools
- Tools with capacity ranking options in addition to numerical scoring seem to be more useful - Present a picture of organization's capacity level/stage and quantitative/qualitative progress
- Tools with various assessment methodologies appear to be more effective as they reduce subjectivity (data triangulation)
- Lack of standardization makes tools and results unreliable
- The process of assessing capacity is a learning experience itself



Options for the Way Forward

- Establish a common, yet customizable, framework including a set of operational definitions of capacity and a set of indicators
- Establish balance between need for performance indicators and recognition of capacity development as a learning and adaptation process that may not lead to quick “quantifiable” results or outcomes
- Involve key stakeholders in indicator development as part of the capacity building strategy design and in measuring progress
- Assess strengths and limitations of existing indicators and tools, including their validity and reliability and make needed improvements



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